Reflections on the State of Music

Well, here it is. The first edition of blah, blah, blah, the new monthly column about music in the *Ingenium*. Trying to decide what to write about is a little difficult, since there are so many possibilities--record reviews, general thoughts on current music topics, editorials on the state of musical affairs, etc. Look to see some of each of these things in this column in the future. But for this month.....

Do you know what college radio is all about? Do you know that your school has an FM station that transmits to the entire Milwaukee metropolitan area? If you're like a lot of MSOE students, your response to the latter question is "Oh yeah. WMSOE or something like that, right? I tried to get it once, but all I heard was some loud song. It sounded a lot like noise to me." Unfortunately, many MSOE students never take advantage of the tremendous resource they have available in WMSE 91.7FM, MSOE's radio station.

A trivia question--what do the following artists all have in common? Depeche Mode, New Order, Information Society, Tracy Chapman, U2, REM, The Cure, Sinead O'Connor, Living Colour, Technotronic, and Modern English. If you guessed that *all* of these artists were "broken" on college radio stations like WMSE, you're right! **WMSE plays music that other radio stations are afraid to touch.** Why? Because a commercial radio station is forced to play music that they *know* people want to hear. Commercial radio stations are unwilling to take a chance, because there is money at stake. The fact of the matter is this: if college stations like WMSE had *not* been playing the artists mentioned above, their appearance on commercial stations would have been much slower if it had happened at all. Did you know that WMSE was playing Tracy Chapman's single *Fast Car* fully six *months* before commercial radio caught on? Did you know that REM was a fixture on college radio for years until their album *Green* was finally picked up by commercial radio? The fact of the matter is that college radio serves an important function in the music industry--it is a "proving ground" for artists that commercial stations won't take a chance on.

"Big deal" you say. "What does all that stuff have to do with me?" Well, for one thing, your tuition pays for around 50% of WMSE's operating costs, so you should be concerned. In addition, WMSE wants students like you to help out with engineering and DJ positions.

"Aha!" you say, "if I get an air slot, WMSE won't let me play whatever I want, will it?" You are correct if you make that statement. But let's put the issue in perspective. **Rule #1)** There is *no* radio station, *anywhere*, that will allow you to play whatever you want. This is true of college stations as well as commercial stations. If you don't believe me, ask someone in broadcasting. **Rule #2)** WMSE *will* let you play anything you want, provided it is A) *not* heard on other Milwaukee stations, and B) not obscene or otherwise morally unacceptable.

Now if you ask me, that's a pretty good deal. If you were a DJ at UW-Whitewater's WSUW-FM, you would be forced to play certain types of songs in a certain order every hour. The same is true at other UW campuses. At WMSE no such policies exist--DJ's are encouraged to express their musical interests during their shows.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone--professors, students, parents, regents--to listen to WMSE. Find out what it has to offer. WMSE has special programs that cover almost every kind of music you can think of. Blues, Christian, rap, reggae, jazz, classical, folk, big band, new age, and women's music all have special programs on WMSE. Did you know that? Did you know that WMSE has a different DJ on the air about every 3 hours and that each DJ plays his/her own favorite styles of music?

If there is only one thing you do this year, let it be a good close listen to WMSE, your college radio station. If you really take the time to get to know WMSE, I'm sure you won't be disappointed. Until next time, goodbye and good listening.

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$4.00 PER TICKET

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Saturday, Nov. 24

vs. PEORIA RIVERMEN

@ 7:30 P.M.

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